



U.S. Rep. John B. Larson CT01 First Congressional Youth Cabinet

Saturday, April 27, 2013 10 a.m. – Noon

State Capitol, Senate Caucus Room (third floor) Hartford

Meeting Minutes

Co-Chair to Congressman Larson: Alexander Pokorski, Southington

10 a.m., Chairman Alexander Pokorski opened the meeting and provided the welcome.

The Chair asked each CYC member present to provide the “Youth Update” from their town as well as a their progress on implementing the “Gun Violence Poll”

Going forward, Alex asked that each CYC member come prepared at each formal meeting of the CYC, a brief update of important issues youth are dealing with in their respective towns-as agreed in the CYC “Member Obligation” form.

IMPORTANT: For CYC members who will be graduating from high school this year: It was decided several years ago, that those CYC members who were graduating from high school and moving onto their college careers would provide the CYC coordinator (Eva), with the names of **two individuals** who are either high school students at the freshman or sophomore level who are committed and able to provide unbroken representation of youth voice for their respective towns.

It’s important to remember, that the Congressman feels strongly that “once a CYC member, always a CYC member.” Those CYC members who graduate from high school are considered “senior” members and are encouraged to participate in any and all CYC meetings.

CYC webpage design: Edmund Skowronek, Communications Director to Congressman Larson provided CYC members an overview of the Congressman’s website redesign. The CYC has a “button” on the Congressman’s homepage that leads to an overview of the CYC mission, meeting minutes, photos, the CYC report, etc. Ed announced that the Congressman would like the CYC to take the lead on the CYC webpage redesign. There was discussion that in addition to the current content on the page, there should also be “important links for youth” (including the CYC pages of other Congressional Members as well as their Facebook pages) added. In addition it was discussed to include a rolling scroll that

announces of important events, legislation etc. on the page. Ed asked that CYC members email him with additional ideas for the page: Edmund.skowronek@mail.house.gov

Overview of work on “CT Trails Days” Event: The weekend of June 1st 2013 marks the state’s celebration of “CT Trails Days.” This event is meant to highlight the natural beauty of CT’s trails and to increase public awareness of the support our natural environments require in order to preserve our trails for future generations.

As a part of the weekend’s celebration, the CYC and Congressman Larson have decided to co-host an event with East Hartford officials at the Hockanum River Linear Park. The event will be on **Saturday, June 1st from 9 a.m. until at least 1 p.m.** It will include a trail clean up of a two mile stretch of the trail starting at the back of the East Hartford Town Hall. At the conclusion of the clean up, the CYC has planned a “CT Trails Mix Competition” with “celebrity” judges from the East Hartford town government, state and federal officials representing the environment, blue ways, greenways, etc. There will be food, music and 1st prize award for the best “CT Trails Mix.” The CYC is planning its media campaign to get as many people out to the Hockanum River Linear Park as possible. Flyers and other outreach activities will be developed at the May 19th meeting of the CYC.

Update from Congressman Larson: The Congressman shared an overview of the recent vote of the federal “Manchin-Toomey” bill that would have developed a “universal background check” on gun purchases. The bill failed by 6 votes in the United States Senate. The Congressman shared his disappointment of the bills failure. He is a co-sponsor on the House bill that mirrors the Senate bill, the “King-Thompson” bill.

Discussion on PYC Legislation: The Congressman will be reintroducing the “Presidential Youth Council” (PYC) legislation in this 113th Congress. He asked CYC members to think about the best way to announce the introduction of the bill in order to secure further congressional support (press conference, etc.). CYC members discussed using a “PopVox” link to allow people to contact their Member of Congress to sign onto the bill-thus making it very easy for anyone to ask their Member to support the bill. The group asked that Matthew Wilson, CYC member from Wethersfield, provide an overview of what the “Campaign for a PYC” has developed for this session of Congress in order to garner more support from congressional members to ensure the bill’s passage.

Since this bill was introduced at the request of Connecticut’s First Congressional Youth Cabinet, each CYC member should feel especially responsible for helping to bring the bill to a successful passage. The legislation, if passed, would allow Members of Congress who have a CYC (and youth from other types of organizations) to send a youth representative to meet with the President of the United States on a periodic basis, to provide input to the executive level on youth issues. This is an important opportunity to bring meaningful youth engagement to all levels of government. It was agreed, that every CYC should be doing all it can to help make this a reality in our country. There was discussion at today’s meeting to contact members of other CYCs to make certain that they’re participating in growing support for the bill.

Youth Engagement Forum: the CYC and Congressman Larson will be hosting a “Youth Engagement Forum” on July 12, 2012 (location TBD). The goal of the forum is to answer these questions on why youth engagement is important:

- “What?” What is “true” youth engagement? What does it look like in practice?
- “Why?” The science behind effective interventions for youth. There is now solid scientific evidence that supports the fact that engaging youth in the development of youth related policies, programs and program evaluations will increase good outcomes.
- “How?” Providing the “framework” for meaningful youth engagement.

Invited guests would be students, and adults from the policy world. A list of possible guest speakers has been developed and we will be moving forward on identifying who might be available to participate.

At noon, Alex and the Congressman closed the meeting. As always, any CYC member who has a topic they would like included on the agenda for the next official meeting of the CYC, should contact the CYC coordinator at eva.bunnell@mail.house.gov